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brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

Our observations shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief of some people and providing a warrior display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mapi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of these the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

The emotional quality of mourning (*ubuhlu*) is different in

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Nyakyusa pagan society from its quality in England. The word *akalila* in other contexts means to cry, weep, or complain aloud; at burial it is used to refer specifically to the wailing, and by extension to the whole of the ritual. The quality of Nyakyusa mourning is both more openly terrified and grief-stricken and also more lively than in England. And these two qualities of fearful grief and sociality are very closely connected.

That some at least of those who attend a Nyakyusa burial are moved by grief is easy to establish. We have heard people talking regretfully in ordinary conversation of a man's death; we have seen a man whose sister had just died walk over alone towards her grave and weep quietly by himself without any parade of grief; and we have heard of a man killing himself because of his grief for a dead son. But, even among the chief mourners, they are not all grieved: 'There are some men', said an old woman, 'who have no sorrow when their wives die. J., when his wife died, was quite unmoved; and some women are not much upset when they lose their husbands. L. was not when her husband died; perhaps she was thinking of marrying again, for she was quite young. But old women are always grieved for they cannot marry again.'

Whatever their private feelings may be, however, the chief mourners and other relations are obliged for very shame to show signs of grief. The chief women mourners, as we have seen, may not dance; the more distant women relations may not adorn themselves; and all the chief mourners, both men and women, are expected to weep and shed tears. We have seen an old man weeping at his half-brother's burial, although the two had, notoriously, been on very bad terms and had hardly spoken to each other for years. And all relations, however distant, who come to a burial are expected to greet the chief mourners sympathetically. Very many non-relations do so too, but they may omit the greeting without offence, if there is a great crowd present.

We have plenty of evidence that the grief at death is largely mixed with fear. It is, indeed, probable that the fear of death (fear of their own future death, fear of the shades, fear of the contagion of the corpse) troubles some people at a burial more deeply than grief. Be this as it may, it is clear that the mourning is, for some, an expression of real fears. And it is the relations, above all, who are afraid. Neither contagious diseases nor subsequent affliction by the shades, nor the vague contagion of the corpse concern any non-relations, except those who dig the grave and bury the dead

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mass; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[11] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent these happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief. 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief exasperates us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalized' properly implies conscious work and adjustment of thought, but simply the fact of its existence.

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forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(e) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumbe*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

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764 the evening saying with admiration that it was a most impressive
556 (asiye) burial; months or years afterwards it is still remembered and described with pride by the family, with admiration by the neighbours. What is chiefly remembered is the number of cattle killed and the number of people present; sometimes the vigour of the women's wailing and of the men's dancing is also described.

(f) *A particular burial* (recorded by G. W.)

764 It is the second day; the man, who was quite young, died yesterday afternoon and was buried early this morning. I arrive at 7.30 a.m. to find that the wailing is the dominant activity. The dead man's house is full of weeping men and women, shedding tears and wailing in the conventional high-pitched voice. His sister, his young wife, a step-mother, a classificatory brother and two half-brothers, with many other women, are inside the house. The noise is considerable. The rest of the women, fifty or more, are seated just outside, in and around an unfinished bamboo house which he died leaving half-built; they too are weeping and wailing. A few men are seated in a group on the opposite side of the swept place facing the women; they are either silent or talking soberly.

764 The emotional pitch is very high. The classificatory brother leaves
• 781 the house and walks about round the new grave with his hands to his head, shedding tears and calling: 'Alas! Alas! What kin are left? Alas! What kin are left?' He is a mature man about forty years old. Then he takes by the hand a half-sister of the dead man, a woman of thirty or more, smothered in mud and pot-black, her belly supported by many bark-cloths, and with a baby on her back; together they walk over the grave weeping and wailing, addressing each other in words that I fail to distinguish, and stumbling about as though blind with grief. The baby sleeps quietly all the time. Then comes an old woman, stepmother of the dead man, leading a daughter in each hand (his half-sisters), all wailing, shedding tears and calling out indistinguishable words. They sit down on the newly-filled grave with their arms on one another's shoulders rocking to and fro and weeping. More people keep arriving and in the background now is the insistent wailing of seventy or a hundred women in and outside the house.

For the first hour after my arrival the drums are only occasionally beaten, and a few young men rush across the grave brandishing spears, but only spasmodically.

The two half-brothers, after wailing in the house, come outside and walk up and down together still weeping. Then they each take a spear and run back and forth several times wailing the dead man's name.

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One of the half-sisters, meanwhile, rolls over and over in the fresh earth of the grave in passionate contortions, with the tears running down her cheeks. Gradually a group of women relatives collects on the grave, eight or nine of them; they sit huddled up together with their arms on one another's shoulders wailing. One woman, before she sits down, makes a series of trembling gestures towards the grave, crying out 'Awuuu!' in fearful grief.

Then, at last, the drums begin in earnest and the young men start to dance. The insistent vital rhythm of the drums contrasts sharply with the grief and despair of the wailing. The situation begins to change. Still in the house the wailing is loud and continuous, but the women on the grave give place to the dancers and return to the house, while the group of women outside gradually ceases wailing and turns all its attention to the dance. The conversation among the men changes also, most are silent now and the talk is more eager than before. Soon the dancers begin to cut the bananas; one even falls full on a young man's head, causing loud laughter among the onlookers. But at first the dance, though always lively, is by no means wholly gay. The male kinsmen dance with grief in their looks, calling out 'Alas!' as each shakes his spear.

No women are yet dancing at all; two or three kinswomen whither almost distraught, and one of the half-sisters in particular seems quite blind to the dancers, who have to get out of her way. The situation is, however, a lively one, and it becomes livelier still as the young men from another village come to join in, bringing three more drums with them. Six drums are now being beaten and about thirty young men are dancing. Two hours have passed since I first arrived.

At 4.30 p.m. I am back again to find the scene changed once more. There is no sound of wailing, not even inside the house. About a hundred men are either dancing or standing round looking on, with a number of girls walking rhythmically about among the dancers. These girls are non-relatives and adorned with great finish.

The young men leap and dance, some with more agility than others; they stamp, roll on the ground, leap in the air, turn somersaults, hurl their spears into the earth and fight invisible enemies. All the spectators, save the chief women mourners and one or two of the men, seem lively and excited. I see the young wife of the dead man looking tired and sad, and she and the other women chief mourners spend most of the time in the house; but one of the half-brothers, on the other hand, who appeared to be so greatly affected seven or eight hours before, is laughing gaily as he dances.

Two cows have been killed and are now being cut up. As the sun sinks and the dancers go away home, taking their meat with them, the relatives and near neighbours gather round fires and begin to roast and eat the meat. Some is given separately to the groups of friends from

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764 177 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

134 784 Kaswila: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual, not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 The mother's brother (*senzipwe*) hands bananas and meat over his 781 shoulder to the children who are taboo, then he goes off home and 784 they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the bananas grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

Questioner: Why the mother's brother?

Kaswila: Who should give it to them? Their kinsmen (*ndama*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 Questioner: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

Mwandisi: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual. Yes, the coming 113 together of man and woman is a ritual (*lw'ilanganga*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubalebelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*lw'isanda*) they are my comrades (*lwilwanga*) but if Lubalebelo forestalls (*akalinda*) the ritual with his wife then he overstops (*akalinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubalebelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*mwiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shades, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] He son Lubalebelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalebelo's child.

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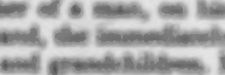
'We perform the ritual upon the immediately-following younger brother of a man, on his wife, children, and grandchildren. On the husband, the immediately-following younger sister of a woman, children, and grandchildren. My mother's sister here did not immediately follow her, therefore she does not have the ritual done for her.'



B. died first. A. performed the ritual for him. A. has now died and C. does not perform the ritual.

K. has no wife with him, she's left him.

I returned the same evening just before sunset, as they told me to. We waited a long time. K's classificatory mother asked him: 'What about the corn of beasts?' And he went off to arrange with a neighbour that he should not send 'send' a particular corn. As the light faded from the sky, Sijale, the officiant, arrived, walking as she always does with the help of a stick. Still we waited for N., and by the time she came it was full night.

From the moment of Sijale's arrival there was a prolonged discussion as to whether or not we should include maize in this evening's ritual food, or whether beans alone were correct. Precedents were quoted from previous rituals, including that of the dead woman's husband and those of the local chief's family. Sijale left declaring that to include maize was a Sangu custom. After N. arrived, the argument continued and it was finally decided that beans alone were correct. For about half an hour after we were all gathered ready in the hut, round the fire, the talk continued. N. and S. described, with immense enjoyment, the rest of the ritual, particularly the battling with maize. Although, as we shall see later, the maize symbolizes death and the corpse, there was no atmosphere of awe about the description—it was vigorous and expressive and punctuated by the laughter of the listeners. There was no solemnity; no evidence anyway of awe; the two officiants, the principals, and the rest of us laughed and talked all the time. It was clearly thought more important to perform the ritual correctly, but not, apparently, the least important to spread a 'religious atmosphere' over it.

'Who shall begin? Let the young gentleman (*sifisa*) begin!' The child was made to begin, K. followed and K's younger brother came last. Kalera held his son's hands open to receive the beans and powdered medicine, in front of the fire. A pot was put on the fire and beans brought in calabash spoons. Sijale began by opening her little packet of powdered medicine and putting a pinch into the pot with a few beans, then she poured in some water from a drinking calabash. As she did each of these activities she said: 'This is the ritual of my wife.' (N.B. she was speaking for the child, grandsons call their grandmothers 'my wife'.) Then the child was helped to do the same thing. Sijale put

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is the act of God, let it work, His house is great. But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is. I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *munyeleman*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

> "You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

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There are numerous stories, which, if they do nothing else, illustrate the naïve faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1910, when Kabeta's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1913 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

> "You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after roaring angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *injukula* is a whitish snake, about four feet long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankonde, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *pasi* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the maker of the drug; should he, however, kill the snakes, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

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one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission. 717[3] 795[2]

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptized in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [681]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of members mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [778] [944] [795]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [855]